

# Project Proposal

**Proposal Title:** Terra East Juniper Thinning- Phase 2, Bullhog Treatment

**Proposal Number:** 1362

**DWR Region:** Central Region

**Lead Agency:** BLM

**County:** Tooele

**Project Manager:** Brook Chadwick

**PM Phone:** 8014915653

**Regional Priority:** Within Focus Area

**Project Type:** Terrestrial Habitat

**Proposed Start Date:** 7/1/2009

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**Project Location:** 10 miles south of the town of Terra in Rush valley

**Project Description:** Bullhog juniper on 1,191 acres of degraded sagebrush habitat (90% removal) and create 3 miles of 200 ft wide fire breaks on existing roads

**Description of Problem/Need:** Healthy sagebrush ecosystems should consist of a diverse array of plants and support a wide variety of wildlife species. However, sagebrush habitat on the western slope of the Onaqui Mountains is seriously degraded due to juniper encroachment. Where junipers dominate they outcompete understory species for light, moisture, and nutrients eventually resulting in nearly complete removal of the understory. Without understory vegetation the native seed bank is depleted and the site becomes susceptible to soil erosion and invasion by cheatgrass. Excessive fuel buildup can eventually lead to catastrophic wildfire which may threaten private property and further degrade the ecosystem by promoting the growth and expansion of cheatgrass. Once established, cheatgrass becomes a major obstacle preventing the recolonization and growth of native perennial vegetation. In order to curb this process of degradation it is essential that action be taken. Degraded sagebrush habitat can be improved by removing junipers and reseeding with perennial species. This proactive approach reduces the risk of catastrophic wildfire and possible cheatgrass encroachment by decreasing fuel loads and replenishing the seedbank with desirable species. The Salt Lake Field Office of the BLM will treat the encroaching juniper to decrease the risk of high severity wildfire, restore ecosystem function, and improve wildlife habitat.

**Objectives:** Project Objectives:

1. ☐ Improve Fire Regime Condition Class, decrease fuel loading and reduce the risk of catastrophic crown fire by removing at least 90% of existing junipers.

2. ☐ Improve wildlife habitat and increase vegetation diversity by seeding the site with perennials prior to mastication. Improve vigor of surviving sagebrush stands.

**Relevance to Strategic Plans:** The project area occurs within the sagebrush steppe type which is one of the key habitats identified in the WAP. This area supports mule deer (Tier III) and Greater sage grouse (Tier II). Numerous other species of concern (Tier III) also inhabit the area including neotropical birds and raptors. The proposed treatments lie within Central Region UPCD focus areas.

The proposed treatments will help address strategies outlined in the WDARM sage grouse conservation plan; By 2010, reduce pinyon/juniper stands from sage-grouse use areas. Reduce the threat of conversion of sagebrush stands to invasive/noxious weed communities. Work with public and private partners to implement livestock management plans that address seasonal needs of sagegrouse

and livestock operations. By 2016, increase brood-rearing habitat quality in the Resource Area.

The proposed projects will address some of the habitat management strategies outlined in the deer management plan for herd unit 19 (Vernon) including: continue to restore and improve sagebrush steppe habitats critical to deer according to DWR's Habitat Initiative; cooperate with federal land management agencies and private landowners in carrying out habitat improvements such as reseeding, controlled burns, water developments etc. on public and private lands; and maintain and/or enhance forage production through direct range improvements throughout the unit to achieve population management objectives.

The proposed projects will address the following goals and objectives of the Division of Wildlife Resources most recent strategic management plan:

Resource Goal: expand wildlife populations and conserve sensitive species by protecting and improving wildlife habitat.

Objective 1: protect existing wildlife habitat and improve 500,000 acres of critical habitats and watersheds throughout the state by 2010.

Objective 3: conserve sensitive species to prevent them from becoming listed as threatened or endangered.

Constituency Goal: Achieve broad-based support for Division programs and budgets by demonstrating the value of wildlife to all citizens of Utah.

Objective 2: improve communication with wildlife organizations, public officials, private landowners, and government agencies to obtain support for Division programs.

Projects of this nature are identified in the BLM's Onaqui Mountain West Allotment Management Plan (1986), and the Onaqui Mountain Habitat Management Plan for the Onaqui wild horse herd, Pony Express Resource Management Plan (RMP) (1990) Decision One page 56, as amended by the SLFO Fire Management Plan (FMP) (1998) Alternative 2-Proposed Action/Integrated Fire/Resource Management Plan page seven in order to improve the condition of the rangeland. The objectives in the Government Creek Fire Management Unit are to utilize fuels treatments to reduce fire severity and occurrence and reduce hazardous fuel accumulation in areas that will reduce the threat of large uncontrolled wildland fires, create mosaics to increase edge effect, and improve wildlife and plant diversity (BLM-Salt Lake Field Office, Fire Management Plan, September 2004). The Terra East EA (UT-020-2007-019) and West Onaqui EA (UT-020-2005-0045) specify the need and authorization for mechanical treatments in this area.

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**Potential Risks:** Failure of seeded species to establish. Mormon cricket infestation in area prior to seeded species establishing.

**Proposed Methods:** 1. ☐ Use rubber-tired or tracked bullhogs to masticate 1,191 acres of juniper. The treatment will remove at least 90% of junipers. Residual trees are to be of varying size and age classes and left in small clumps to act as untreated islands. The edges of the treatment unit will be designed in a mosaic fashion to blend into the natural landscape and to increase edge effect. All brush species will be avoided when possible;  
2. ☐ Aerial seed prior to mastication implementation.

**Shapefile Name:** 1362\_Terra\_East\_Ph2\_bullhog\_proposed\_2009

**Seed Source:** GBRC

**UPCD Reg Team Coord Date:** 11/6/2008

**Proposed  
NEPA Action:**

**Proposed  
Arch Action:**

☒ **Vegetation Monitoring** ☐ **Wildlife Monitoring**

**Monitoring Information:** The BLM will conduct at least two 1/10 acre stand data monitoring sites which include photo points within the treatment boundary. The data collected include juniper canopy cover, density, basal diameter, and height. Line point intercept transects will also be established to measure understory vegetation cover and composition. All plots will be read prior to treatment and soon after treatment and may continue for up to 5 years post treatment.

**Grazing Management:** Treatments will occur primarily within the Onaqui West Allotment with a small portion of treatment (<30 acres) on the Skull Valley Allotment. Juniper encroachment is listed as a threat to native and seeded areas on these allotments. The mastication treatment would improve the demand for forage among livestock and wildlife and would move the area towards the attainment of rangeland health

## SPECIES BENEFITING

Mule Deer

Ferruginous Hawk

Greater Sage-grouse

Shrubsteppe Birds

## LAND OWNERSHIP

Owner	Acres
BLM	1191
<b>Total</b>	<b>1191</b>

## PROPOSED FUNDING

Source	Amount Requested	Date Approved	Amount Approved
BLM	\$195,560.00		\$0.00
Unfunded Balance	\$59,767.00		\$0.00
BLM ARRA	\$121,265.00	3/12/2009	\$121,265.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$376,592.00</b>		<b>\$121,265.00</b>

## PROPOSED BUDGET

Item	Description	DWR Account	Partner Contrib.
NEPA	NEPA prep, scoping, and consultation	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Personal Services	Project layout, and administration 14 days	\$0.00	\$1,800.00
Personal Services	Monitoring 2 days	\$0.00	\$300.00

Monday, March 16, 2009 10:27:46 AM

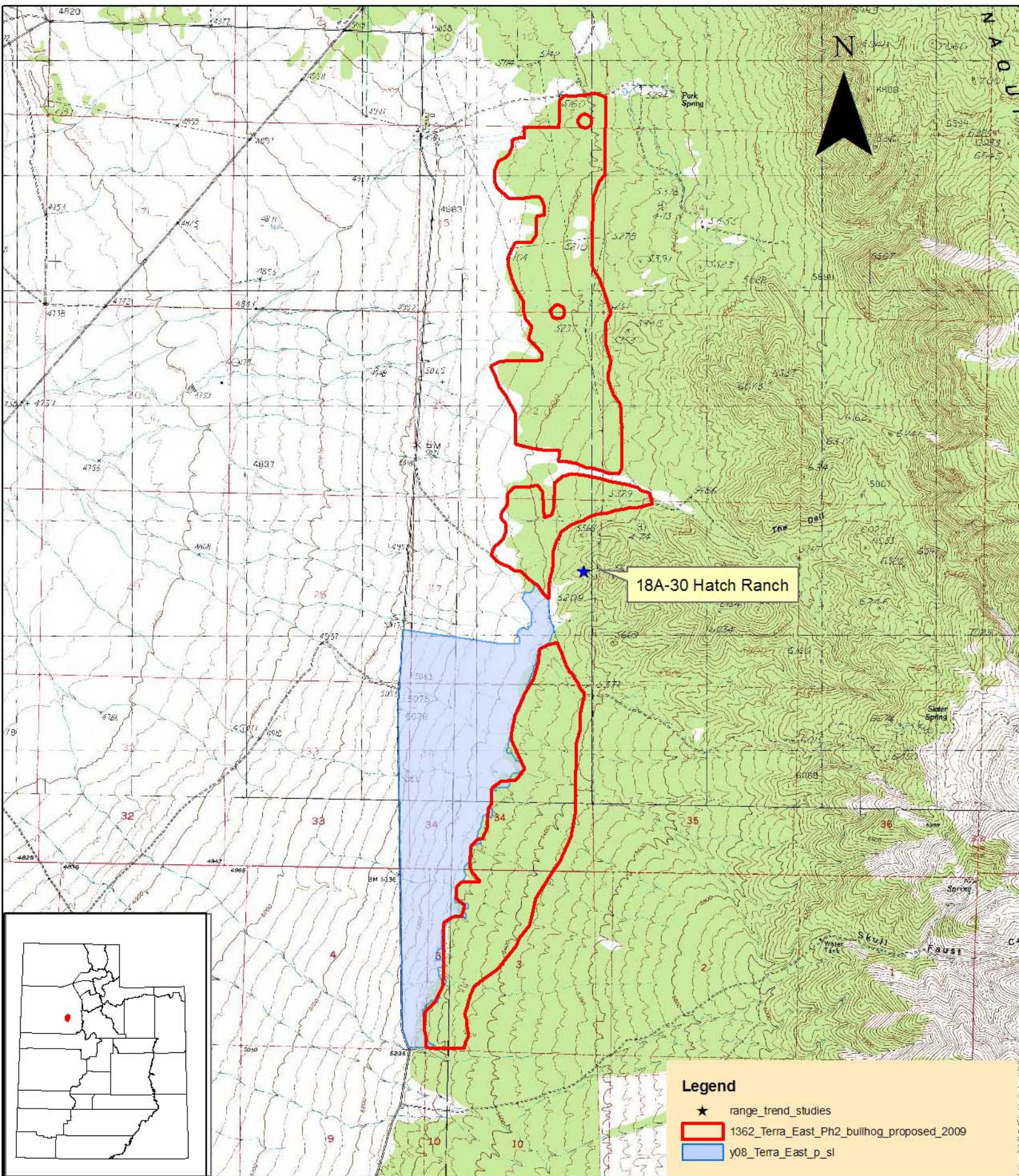
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Equipment Rental	BLM seasonal truck	\$0.00	\$1,000.00
Archaeological Survey	Cutlural clearance for 1,197 acres @ \$19.30/acre	\$0.00	\$23,102.00
Contractual Services	Bullhog contract for 60% of area @ \$230/acre	\$0.00	\$164,358.00
Contractual Services	Bullhog contract for 40% of area @ \$230/acre	\$109,572.00	\$0.00
Seed (GBRC)	Seed for 1,191 acres @ \$60/acre	\$71,460.00	\$0.00
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$181,032.00</b>	<b>\$195,560.00</b>

## Project Map:



# Terra East Phase 1 & 2,



## Legend

- ★ range\_trend\_studies
- 1362\_Terra\_East\_Ph2\_bullhog\_proposed\_2009
- y08\_Terra\_East\_p\_sl



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0 0.375 0.75 1.5 Miles